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Swiss-Italian Gardens in Victoria



Silver Anniversary

MISSION STATEMENT

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.

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Cover: Lavandula, a European inspired garden in an Australian setting.
Photo: courtesy Carol White.



Our patrons-elect, John and Lynne Landy.
Photo: courtesy Government House Melbourne.

From The Chair

OF THE NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

It is now late October and I have just returned from Perth where John Viska and the conference committee organised a most enjoyable and informative annual conference. The Society could not sustain its activities without this generous gesture each year by a small group of people in each state. On behalf of all our members, I extend our most grateful thanks to these volunteers. The National Management Committee met for a day prior to the conference and our annual general meeting was held during the conference.

At the AGM I announced that Margaret Darling had decided to retire as our Patron. Margaret has made an enormous contribution to the Society — as a foundation member, as our Chairman and then as our most recent Patron. Margaret's support, her strength, her generosity and her graciousness have been a significant influence within the Society for over half its life and on behalf of all our members I thank her most sincerely and most warmly.

The Society is extremely fortunate that John and Lynne Landy have agreed to be our Patrons-elect. John Landy, AC, MBE, is currently the Governor of Victoria and is well known for his keen interest in the conservation of Australian flora and fauna, his professional experience in National Parks management and as a foundation member of the Land Conservation Council of Victoria (1971-1979). Many members will know Lynne Landy through her career in journalism, most recently as Melbourne Editor of *Australian Country Style*. Mrs Landy has a keen interest in the visual and performing arts and community projects. In March 2005 she launched a program to assist mature-aged professionals volunteer their skills to not-for-profit organisations. The

Landys will commence their term as our Patrons following their retirement from their current positions in April 2006.

We are currently in our 25th year as a Society and I am delighted that we will mark the close of our 25th year with a commemorative tree planting at Cruden Farm, the home of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, our first Chairman and first Patron. It is proposed that this will take place on 2 April 2006. At the NMC meeting we also agreed to recommend that Branches commemorate the occasion by planting a tree in an historic garden in their own region. It would be particularly appropriate to make this a replacement for a significant tree that has senesced. To celebrate our 25th Anniversary our editor is currently preparing a special issue of our journal, additional to our regular issues.

For the past two years we have been assessing how the Society can sustain itself financially and to this end we have recognised that, if we do not substantially increase membership fees, we need regular fund raising activities and I would like to acknowledge the generosity of individuals that are assisting the Society in this area. At the most recent meetings we turned our attention to membership and recognised the need to inspire not only potential members but all our members because we only sustain our commitment to the conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes through the combined talents and mass of our membership. In 2006 we will ask members to participate in a survey prior to a NMC planning day devoted to membership. We look forward to hearing from each of you so that we ensure our Society remains relevant to our membership and its aims.

Colleen Morris.

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Plant Auctioneers & Travelling Salesmen

BY RICHARD CLOUGH

In 1867 John Thomas Baptist sent consignments of plants to fourteen cities and towns in Australia and three in New Zealand, where they were sold by auction, twenty-three separate auctions being held. This typified the entrepreneurial flair that enabled this migrant from Portugal, who arrived in Australia a poor vine dresser, to become a rich nurseryman and prominent citizen. The development of this aspect of his business can be traced in his papers, now housed in the Mitchell Library.

He began selling outside Sydney in 1855 when his employer, John Stevens, was sent to Melbourne with a shipment of plants. The venture must have been profitable as Stevens was sent there again the following year. At first Stevens appears to have sold direct to customers, but in August 1857 an auction, the first to be recorded, was held in Melbourne.

Other employers to take consignments there were William Paradise from July to September 1860 and Joseph James, junior, in August 1866. It is interesting to note that in March 1856 both Stevens and James were earning a pound a week, while Paradise, a new employee, was earning the same wage nine years later.

At this time country people had only a limited range of garden plants readily available locally. Until the arrival of railways getting plants from city nurseries was beset with difficulties as is shown in the Baptist correspondence where the words 'all dead' are frequently found. In an effort to meet the needs of keen gardeners and at the same time to expand his business Baptist began dispatching collections for auction in country towns, the first being at Bathurst in 1861. Over the next nine years he organized eleven auctions there. Other towns in New South Wales where they were held were Armidale, Forbes, Goulburn, Maitland, Newcastle, Singleton and West Maitland.

In Queensland, in addition to Brisbane, auctions were held in Bowen, Ipswich, Maryborough, Toowoomba and Townsville. Adelaide was the only location in South Australia and four auctions were held there between 1867 and 1869. None were recorded for Tasmania or Western Australia. Across the Tasman plants were shipped to eight centres between 1864 and 1868; to Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill, Napier, Nelson, Oamaru and Timaru. Employers were not necessarily sent in charge of their

consignments. Judge Lutwyche wrote from Brisbane to report that William Carron, one of the survivors of the Kennedy expedition to Cape York, was in a drunken stupor and the plants he was supposed to be looking after were dying on the wharf.

While only some of the auction lists survive, they give an indication of the scope of the consignments. That held in Adelaide on 30 May 1867, the first held there, was made up of ninety-three lots with each lot consisting of from three to six plants. Camellias formed the largest group, closely followed by azaleas and pinks. The auctioneer, Joel Lyons, wrote to say 'they fetched very good prices' and suggested 'a much larger shipment would sell well'. The sale at Dunedin, conducted by McLandress, Hepburn and Co., on 11 July the following year contained 204 lots. 'Ornamental and flowering shrubs' made up the first 142 lots, No.1 being eight *Ilex cornuta* and No. 142 being *Camellia* 'Perdita'. Lots 143 to 202 were 'Fruit Trees', No. 143 being three large Blue Provence figs and No. 202 three Kentish cherries. Lot 203 was 1,600 asparagus plants while seeds of 29 varieties of vegetables made up Lot 204.

The only fully priced list in the collection is for a sale in Dunedin in 1867 of plants consigned by Francis Ferguson of Camden. Most of the 100 items appear to have consisted of six plants growing in pots. The lowest priced item was 'sweet bay' at sixpence, while the highest was a single plant of 'auracaria excelsa' at 8/6d.

That Ferguson competed with Baptist in other centres is shown by the letter from the latter's agent in Nelson who accounted for the poor prices fetched at the auction he had conducted on one for Ferguson having just been held there. Competition however did not affect their friendship, Miss Ferguson staying with the Baptists while she mastered the latest technological advance, the sewing machine.

Willing to try novel ideas,. Baptist appointed a salesman to take a consignment of plants on a ship bound for Bombay in 1864. Sales at points en route , Batavia (Jakarta) and Singapore were, perhaps not surprisingly, disappointing, while those at Bombay, Colombo and Bombay again on the ship's return, were no better.

The only auctions conducted by Baptist after 1869 were in Sydney in 1872, 1873 and 1874, when after his father's death John Thomas Baptist, junior, gave up retailing to become a rentier. How long the practice was conducted by other nurserymen is not clear.

Two catalogues in the Mitchell Library however show European nurseries sent men to Australia at least up to the 1880s. Both catalogues are in English and in a form suitable for use anywhere English is spoken. The earlier catalogue, printed in Le Havre sometime after 1856 introduces M. Gaugin-Gaudillon, a Member of the Horticultural Society of Paris, who had 'just arrived from Paris with a collection of Flowers and Plants'.

The second catalogue, issued after 1879, by Pellorce and Co., Members of the Agricultural Society of Paris, is sufficiently similar, in places the wording being identical, for a connection to be obvious. The earliest lists ninety-three roses, sixty camellias, many shrubs including banksias, a collection of 'American Flowers, new kinds', fruit trees, seeds, and novelties. Apart from roses which are omitted, the second catalogue contains a similar range of plants. It also has the following headings: store, open at, for and days only, followed by spaces where those details about the collection could be filled in by hand in each city it was taken to. In Sydney it was on show at 285 Pitt Street.

As the examination of old records continues so it becomes clear that nurserymen in the second half of the nineteenth century had an ever increasing range of plants on offer and that gardeners in the country had increasingly easy access to them.

After a notable career in landscape architecture and a lifetime passion for book collecting, Richard Clough now finds much pleasure in assiduous research to discover delightful by-ways in Australia's early horticultural history.

'From Sea to Scarp'

In presenting an overview of the lecture component of the conference, Christopher Vernon of the University of Western Australia highlighted the key points made by the speakers. Commenting on Greg Keighery's reminder that Dutch exploration had preceded British, he believed more attention should be given to this fact and he invited delegates to imagine the possible course of our history if a Dutch colony had been established, suggesting the country would have become a very different place.

Barry Maguire spoke of indigenous people's knowledge of Australia's native plants as food and medicine and their skills in nurturing wild colonies of plants over the seasons. This prompted Vernon's observation that within this indigenous cultural context, all Australia is a garden. This garden, however, intrigued and confounded the early settlers so that scientific study, the collection of natural flora and the acclimatisation of exotic plants were important tasks for pioneer gardeners and nurserymen. Neville Marchant and Carol Hooper effectively covered this theme.

Diana Frylinck stirred everyone with her passion and humour as she introduced the Golden Pipeline. Vernon emphasised that the pipeline was a feat comparable to the Snowy Mountains Scheme but once again, like so many other Western Australian achievements, it has not enjoyed such national and international recognition.

Kingsley Dixon spoke of the growth of the international trade in Australian native plants discussing the way Chinese horticulturists are

cloning species and developing new colour strains in Australian plants for export and use in garden design. This led Vernon to remind us that, for instance, Brazilian Roberto Burle Marx's passion for native flora was prompted by his encounters of it in overseas displays. Too often appreciation of plants species was more apparent in places other than their homeland.

With presentations by Phil Palmer, Tony Blackburn and Gillian Lilleyman the focus turned to landscape design and designers responsible for the changing the face of Perth – the work of John Oldham on the Narrows Interchange, the development of distinctive Joondalup streetscapes and internal reserves later visited in the course of the Conference. And naturally Vernon alluded to the way the Griffins had contributed to Australian urban design generally and internal reserves in particular.

Barbara Dundas brought the spotlight back to the individual interested in preserving a historic site, in her case a house in the significant settlement at Guildford, now under the flight path for planes operating out of Perth. Her paper added much to the visit delegates made to Guildford on the final day of the Conference.

Under the skilful hand of John Viska and his committee the conference was a brilliant success. Who will forget the cocktail party in the revolving 33rd floor of St Martin's tower where we saw the landscape from sea to scarp in the golden glow of a magnificent Perth sunset?

Nina Crone

Below left:
Executive Officer, Jackie Courmadias with Gail Douglass from the Southern Highlands Branch.

Below right:
John Killip from Melbourne with John Sedgley from Metung, Victoria.

Photos:
Nina Crone



The Italianate Gardens of Hepburn Springs

BY GAEL SHANNON



Stone villas in Hepburn Springs, Shepherd's Flat and Yandoit are visible traces of the lives of Italian and Swiss settlers who came to central Victoria's gold diggings, and stayed to develop small farm-holdings once land became available.

Two such buildings have been given new life through Italianate gardens that are an apt context for the villa and a source of food for the

host table. These gardens are inspired by the history of early settlement rather than being historic gardens in themselves.

Most noticeable in Hepburn Springs is Villa Parma, a stunning pensione set in what appears a very formal garden while in the countryside to its north is the iconic Lavandula, a farmhouse, an open garden and a working farm growing lavenders, olives and grapes.



Above:
Villa Parma on Main Road
in Hepburn Springs,
Central Victoria.

Below:
Lavandula at Shepherd's
Flat, north of Daylesford,
Victoria.

Photos:
courtesy Gael Shannan



Above:
Briasca, in Ticino,
Switzerland, seen from
Mount Solgone

Below right:
Typical houses in Briasca

Emigrants & immigrants

The 1850s was a time of change: the Italians were battling to unify their principalities into one nation, travel and immigration were becoming possible, and Romanticism emphasized the value of nature, travel and individualism. The pastoral foundation of Victoria was turned over as men rushed to look for gold, fell in love with the prospect of their new land, and wanted to stay.

Some of those were Swiss nationals. Sophie La Trobe, the wife of Victoria's first lieutenant-governor, was from Neufchatel in Switzerland, so Governor La Trobe, and the Swiss Consul in Sydney, Louis Chapalay, encouraged Swiss to emigrate here. By 1867 the Swiss vice-consul Bischoff estimated there were 4500 compatriots living in Victoria: 2500 Italian-Swiss gold-seekers, 1500 French-Swiss winegrowers and 500 German-Swiss miners.

During the 1850s there had been great hardship in Italy and Switzerland. Crop failures had created food shortages and reduced food reserves. As their valleys faced south, Swiss men were accustomed to moving into Italy for work, but these seasonal workers were left unemployed by the trade bans between Lombardy and Ticino. Within a 15-year period, and often with monetary support from the commune (local government), they abandoned social and political turmoil, and came to the gold-bearing district of Hepburn Springs.

The 1862 Land Act encouraged gold-seekers to settle on small properties, and to explore the growing of food crops. Smallholders, winemakers, dairymen and bakers, pasta

and sausage makers, these Italian-Swiss were from the mountains and knew how to grow their food in difficult soil and a cold climate. They marketed macaroni, cheese and cured meat to the miners; one of the traditional foods handed down the generations is a spiced Italian sausage, the bullboar.

Able to quarry and work with stone, many were successful as miners or stonemasons. They built their own homes. Some opened a grocery or a bakery, or ran a hotel where they could meet compatriots and discuss issues of the day, or play bocce and the music of their homeland.

The Swiss were associated with Victoria's early wine industry. They also noted the presence of mineral water, acknowledging its therapeutic qualities; by 1863 they had formed a group to work with the government to protect mineral water from gold mining sludge. Today 80% of Australia's mineral water springs are in the district around Hepburn Springs.

It is still possible to see traces of plants such as vines and basket willows, drive past hillside terracing, stone houses, barns and walls. The lifestyle of these immigrants is best understood by reading through the historic material at Lavandula, by visiting the former Macaroni Factory, or by spending an elegant weekend at Villa Parma.



Lavandula - a Romantic Notion

When Carol White decided on a change in her lifestyle in the 1970s she was the successful bidder on a property near Hepburn Springs. What she had bought at auction was a romantic ruin – a dilapidated but handsome Italianate stone farmhouse, barn and dairy. She imagined these buildings as the hub of a garden that must complement them. It had to be in the European tradition – it needed Lombardy poplars and exotic trees with autumn colour, a kitchen garden and productive trees.

Under the lime-washed render the house was golden stone needing a great deal of repair and rebuilding. It was built on a basalt reef, so a backhoe was necessary to dig holes for trees. Mullock heaps had to be bulldozed to re-create a creek flat covered with red topsoil brought from the foot of the hill (wonderful *terra rossa* from the extinct volcano Mt Franklin). It made the potager, combining vegetables, flowers and herbs.

‘I had a truly romantic notion from a trip to France where I’d seen stone houses in lavender fields,’ Carol recalls, ‘lavender as a European crop was fields bordered with trees in sweeps or avenues, all of single plantings – plane, alder, linden, poplar, oak, beech, birch.’

‘I suspected lavender was a crop a woman could manage without machinery. I would not do broad-acre farming. I would harvest by hand. I could work it in around the pattern of the lives of my two boys. If an acre went well I could plant more.’

But 20 years ago Carol found it difficult to get lavender. No-one was growing lavender except commercially in Tasmania and there the growers were protective of their clones.

‘Lavender’s image was just changing from granny’s linen cupboard to aromatherapy and French chic’, Carol remembers, ‘yet it was hard to find plants, to take cuttings or to buy young plants. However I located a nurseryman in the Dandenongs with 20 plants, and he took 1000 cuttings for me.

My great luck was that they were *Lavandula angustifolia* x ‘Miss Donnington’, the perfect crop for cut flowers, drying and craftwork.’

Learning

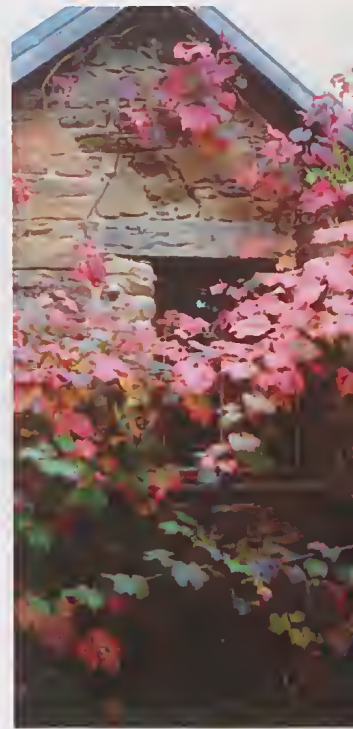
With little knowledge of what was required for optimum growth, Carol didn’t realize the value of good soil preparation. With her petrol-driven cultivator she churned up the rows and turned the weeds into the soil, creating a weed problem for years. Rabbits ate one trial plot, one failed to thrive in a wet spot (where later much SEC mulch produced the ash grove), and two plots on the sandy loam creek flats worked. Carol learned what would survive in dry, frosty conditions through a fast program of research and from travel.

‘For absolutely practical details I visited Provence and Sault and learned about soil type, how to take cuttings and the importance of making regular rows. My brother worked for FAO in Rome and was able to give me the European profile of lavender by altitude, rainfall and temperature. Of course I picked up the visual cues: I did not want to combine lavender and European buildings with Australian plants. I must have a clear European theme to my garden.’

But the Australian love of far horizons was also influencing Carol’s ideas.

‘My vistas were always long. I didn’t plant close to the house. I wanted rural views. The flats stretched out around the house, and the plantings needed to draw the eye on to the next lines and swathes of colour. I planted fields of perfect lavender rows and quadrants of lavender of different colours designed for the distant view. I planted pencil pines for vertical punctuation, stone pines for the skyline.’

The Swiss-Italian family who originally built the *rustica* (the small group of farmhouse and outbuildings) were from Biasca, north of Bellinzona in Ticino, a canton in southern Switzerland. So Carol went there to see how they lived and what they grew. It was inspirational.



Top:
Autumn tinted vine leaves enhance the old stone barn at Lavandula.



Above:
Spring-time at Lavandula.



Top:
Richard Rigby's
Grape Parterre.

Above:
The Water Circle.

'I walked around their villages and churches, looking at their gardens on the steep mountains and in the valleys where the alpine climate is modified by lakes – even *pensiones* had a vegetable garden, a *grotto* (shaded arbour for eating *al fresco*) and the merlot wine grapes growing right up to the door. I took the walking paths along the valleys through cherries and chestnuts, up through the beech forest, to the pasture filled with wildflowers above the snowline. I found their high summer houses and the neglected terraces that once grazed goats and donkeys.'

From that journey Carol knew Lavandula must have a café like the Swiss-Italian *grotto*, serving simple food from the garden in the cuisine of northern Italy, local wine in *boccolino*, served in the shade. That took her interest to the Slow Food movement in Geneva and Italy, and to *agriturismo*.

'So I determined that my Swiss-Italian garden would be productive: on the flats lavender, herbs, a potager, an orchard, and the poultry run, and beyond, the huge dam, a hill of chestnuts, olives, grapes, a heritage orchard.'

A dream realised

Lavandula is a working farm, simple, honest and picturesque; it is set in a pastoral landscape: on the horizontal it fills the bowl of the valley, it is bordered by a creek, hills rise around it providing vistas beyond or a destination for a walk that gives the view back to the whole garden.

Garden planting is of interest in all seasons: on the first day of spring the daffodils are ready, then the tulips and fruit tree blossom; all through summer fragrance is released from lavender as it is harvested slowly by hand sickle, there are roses and berries, linden flowers, herbs and vegetables; in autumn the russet tones are wonderful against the stone, and it's time to pick olives, quinces, wine grapes and nuts – the bountiful harvest is stored, dried and conserved, or served at table; in winter it's a bare bones garden, time for pruning and maintenance. In each season, there's a different reason to enjoy the garden's visual magnificence. Combining garden, setting and view, it is a peaceful place of rest, lawns, secret spots, and an inviting sequence of moods.

Villa Parma - a Singular Challenge

Inspired by the story of architect Phillip Cox moving a stone building on Norfolk Island and restoring it, Richard Rigby yearned for four walls with no roof. In 1970, a friend rang to tell him about a villa in a country town he'd visited for the mineral springs. It sounded perfect.

From a restored house in Williamstown Richard now walked into Villa Parma, a ruin that was open to all. Umbrellas were needed upstairs, there was no roof. But from the windows the view was wonderful across the valley of the springs.

Heritage Victoria made available a low interest loan towards re-roofing to make it sound: roof timbers were replaced, two chimneys rebuilt, one re-rendered and iron capped the roof. The fenestration was plugged with tin. Then insurance was possible.

Villa Parma was on a small block with vacant land around it. As Richard explains:

'We wanted to live here, to house our collection of furniture. And if we were to live in the country we wanted land. But the garden would be constructed on a block of ninety square feet.'

At the front of the house were two rose bushes, wisteria, two hawthorn trees in the corners and a red geranium against the wall. The stump of a

cypress had been carved roughly into the figure of a warrior woman. In the small garden to the north were straggly fruit trees, lots of ivy and periwinkle, large succulents on the driveway and virgilia near the stone wall. A large plum stood clear of long grass in the paddock, beyond were large tagetes, lilacs and a fallen cypress.

In 1966 the neighbouring hotel had sold off this building, reducing the block to the smallest town allotment, depriving it of the driveway that had once been the famous grapevine walk. Now, along the southern and eastern boundaries separating the properties were ten cypresses about ninety feet tall, some pressing hard against the end gable. It was becoming urgent to remove them.

Thoughtful reading and research

The Italian background of the original owner set Richard thinking. He explains his early preparation,

‘Without much capacity to make changes in the first couple of years, I looked for a book on Italian gardens. I’d read about restoring gardens that had some original part of the garden, but here there was no evidence, nothing you thought was slightly original.’

‘I got hold of Georgina Masson’s book *Italian Gardens*’ and at last could see what components made up an Italian garden: a series of spaces that had the power to change your mind; it must be green; totally structured, completely man-made, nothing from nature, nothing left to chance; a water feature.

In the back of the book were lists of plants used in 16th century, 17th century and 18th century Italian gardens.’

Richard thought too about the garden that Fabrizio Crippa might have had here. In 1864 Fabrizio had built this villa in the vernacular style of the Italians of southern Switzerland on the whole hill top, the best site of all his properties, with free draining loamy clay soil. It was a rural property serving his needs: the house with two pencil cypresses in front, a vine walk on the driveway, the northward slope had

vines, fruit trees and tobacco. Nearby was his hotel, his butcher’s shop and abattoir. He worked with other Ticinese townsmen on the early Mineral Springs Committee.

Richard Rigby’s garden

‘There had been no real garden here’, Richard explains, ‘and with no space to create one, it would have to be on a suburban scale. But the plants would be pre-20th century. We were pedantic that the restoration of the building would put it in garden context, and that the garden would tie into the landscape. It would be highly constructed with geometric lines and spaces as a surreal play against the wild Australian bush.’

Richard’s concept of something surreal against the natural Australian landscape is an uncanny echo of the early Swiss Italian perception of the Australian bush. It was the surreal element. Writing home they tried to describe the gum trees: ‘They look just like broccoli’.

Today no matter where you are in the garden at Villa Parma, there’s always the ridgeline of the Australian bush, and Richard comments:

‘Europeans have cleared and manoeuvred their landscapes for thousands of years and so the wild bush disappeared centuries ago. In Australia we still have the luxury of playing them off.’

On the small space around the house Richard made three gardens: front, side and back. From the front is an austere view of the villa beyond a stone fence with dressed stone capping. The geometric beds were lavender-edged and planted with belladonna; now they are box and planted with white tulips. The gateway is the 1970s wisteria growing on a former lamp bracket. In the centre tall rosemary circles an urn, which is ringed with iris. Against the house wall, a stone bench and a single red geranium.

On the north side, the small garden echoes the house: the house footprint becomes a lawn under a large old plum; the house’s front garden there becomes the box-edged rose garden (moss and rugosa) with topiaried conifers and two remnant 1970s cordylines.



Top:
Grape vines at Villa Parma.

Above:
The plum tree, Villa Parma.



Above:
The Fire Square.

'I got Maldon stone and trialled drystone walling, built the planters now filled with blue agapanthus. The stonewalled pond could only go in one space, at the top of the rise as the end view.'

On the driveway Crippa's former vine walk is replicated, a timber pergola covered with Italian grapes supplied by Gail Thomas, a well known gourmet cook and gardener. At the rear of the villa, when sewer works uncovered cobbles in a fine court, all the soil and cypress debris was cleared away and made into a bank topped with a herb garden in the sun.

After Richard moved to the property, he finally acquired the adjacent block and was able to celebrate the space by creating broad terraces that drop down to the north, 'to give some sense of grandeur as you walk down the sloping site.'

Richard's design ideas

'I wanted to espalier fruit trees right around the property. It was a psychological thing because I'd come from suburbia where you're always fenced. But this was a rural space, not an enclosed city space. In winter I would see through the leafless espaliered trees. I wanted that outward look'

'Likewise I wanted a formal garden only to a certain point, before moving the planting into rural provisioning - grapes, fruit trees and vegetables, olives - and finally on into the wild bush block at the northern end.'

'The *broderie* was in my head for years. I knew how to do it, what to do. With box (*Buxus*) I could plant the Grape Parterre to put Fabrizio Crippa's grapes back onto the site: from the central circle/stem, the laterals curve out, tall box forms tendrils, and clusters of river pebbles make the bunch of grapes. It's set in white gravel which some Europeans use in cold climates to ripen their low-growing grapes.'

On the eastern side of the terrace, the lilac hedge is under-planted with hellebores - white and lilac. Urns copied from the Adelaide Botanic Gardens stand atop bagged stone pillars embellished with sea shells. The

gateway leads into the *limonaie*: a square of lawn, in each corner a lemon in terracotta.

The sunken garden is the fire square: a fire pit set in very red scoria with bands of white quartz pebbles set in cement. It balances the pond's water circle and, as Richard explains, 'It refers to the Djadjawarrung people, to dot paintings.' There the broad descending terrace terminates at a clipped Bhutan cypress hedge, enhancing the garden's structure and solitude - and at its foot motionless magpies sculpted by Miriam Porter.

The western edge of the property has other residences set down into the garden where the top of the high stone wall is planted with tiny yellow iris, fritillaries. Here, in full sun, the vegetable garden is bordered with plum and apple trees. In early spring it shows rhubarb, broad beans, leeks, chard and muzumi, young berries full of promise, a lemon tree under-planted with thyme.

Paul Fox² contends that Australia's colonial gardeners re-interpreted the colonizing impulse, creating a distinctive colonial view of the landscape; Hepburn's Swiss-Italians made their houses in the image of home, but with their new *giardina all'italiana* Carol White and Richard Rigby have created the Italian garden in a quite Australian representation.

Gael Shannon lives in Daylesford and describes herself as a wordsmith. She was recently awarded the inaugural Jaegers Literary Award for her script Eureka, a great Australian story using the words and songs of the goldfields. It was performed from Canberra to Port Fairy during the bicentennial of the Eureka incident in Ballarat.

LAVANDULA

350 Hepburn-Newstead Road, Shepherd's Flat, 10 minutes north of Daylesford.

Open daily 10.30am-5.30pm, open garden & licensed café \$3 www.lavandula.com.au Ph. (03) 5476 4393

VILLA PARMA

128 Main Road, Hepburn Springs
Pensione bookings www.villaparma.com.au
Ph. (03) 5348 3512

The property is currently for sale.

THE OLD MACARONI FACTORY

Main Road, Hepburn Springs
Licensed café open weekends.

HEPBURN SWISS ITALIAN FESTA

23-30 April 2006 www.swissitalianfesta.com
Ph. (03) 5348 1555

ENDNOTES

¹ Georgino Mosson, *Itolion Gardens*, Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1987.

² Paul Fox is the author of *Cleorings*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2004.

For the Bookshelf

ENGLISH GARDENS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Tim Richardson
Aurum Press
ISBN: 1 84 513 07 15
RRP: \$98

Reviewed by Christine Reid

Tim Richardson's book is superb. However, don't expect endless lush photographs of thematically perfect colour borders, rolling green lawns, backed by dark yew hedges.

English Gardens of the Twentieth Century's fabulous black and white pictures come from the archives of *Country Life* magazine, where Richardson was, until recently, garden editor. The pictures are illuminating for two reasons. They show the technical brilliance of the work of the mostly unsung garden photographers who worked for the magazine – their composition, attention to lighting and the clarity of their black and white vision.

The pictures also detail the aspirations and dreams of the English garden makers and designers of the past century. Richardson describes gardening as 'England's vernacular art form' which he reveals

through a series of enlightening and thought-provoking essays on the major movements and designs, from Jekyll to the Arts and Crafts movement, and Modernism.

Then, towards the end of the book, he tries to tease out the confusing strands of modern garden styles – with the aid of colour photography in this case. He doesn't mince words here – dwarf conifers are the 'horticultural equivalents of flared trousers'; some gardens 'appear to be on steroids' and other pertinent comments.

Richardson's text and picture choices also highlight fascinating parallels between Australia and England across the past 100 years. Look at an Arts and Crafts pool designed by Oliver Hill for a garden in Berkshire and see the similarities to the work of Harold Desbrowe-Anneer in Toorak gardens; look carefully at Hill's modernist gardens, created in 1934, and here is the template for Australian courtyard gardens of the past ten years. There are many more thought-provoking comparisons.

Ask someone you love dearly to give you this book. It's the perfect present for garden historians.



THE OLD COUNTRY – AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPES, PLANTS AND PEOPLE

George Seddon
Cambridge University Press, Press,
Melbourne, 2005
ISBN: 0 521 84310 3
RRP: \$49.95

Reviewed by Trevor Nottle

It is hardly surprising to discover that the contents of this book are wide ranging, scholarly, erudite and well written. That is what would be expected of an academician such as George Seddon. What is remarkable is that unlike most accepted academic practice Professor Seddon does not adopt the conventional dispassionate style in which the author adopts a degree of distance between himself and the subject at hand. This is the difference that makes all

the difference in the case of George Seddon's book *The Old Country*.

Thus the important discussion George undertakes becomes one in which he engages directly with his readers, linking his own experiences and fascinations, observations and questions to the crucial question of being 'at home' here in Australia. It is an engagement to be recommended and highly enjoyable and stimulating. George is a sharp-minded observer who understands the transplanted cultural roots, including garden making, that still exert a powerful influence on how we comprehend our occupation and stewardship of the place in which we live.

Along the way we are introduced to new information that extends the concept of gardening to include the cultivation of yams by some Aboriginal groups: an idea that is at once surprising, perhaps shocking, and



definitely enlightening. There are excursions into our understanding of weeds, natives and exotics and of our aspirations as artists, designers and inhabitants in this place called Australia. Even the title, *The Old Country*, heralds George's intent to challenge our understanding of what it is to be here. He wastes no time in turning our understanding of the 'Old Country' upside down. England and Europe are not the Old Countries after all, except by cultural reference. Australia is the real Old Country with a fossil record and geology to

demonstrate that along with ancient remnant plants such as the recently discovered Wollemi Pine and an indigenous culture that is old as memory itself.

A most remarkable and compelling book that will be enjoyed by a diverse cross-section of Australians, but with particular attractions for gardeners who think beyond the horticultural life of make-over gardening shows on TV and fashionista exterior decoration stylists.



PICTURESQUE PURSUITS: COLONIAL WOMEN ARTISTS & THE AMATEUR TRADITION

Caroline Jordan
Melbourne University Press 2005
ISBN: 0 522 85097 9
RRP: \$49.95

Reviewed by Nina Crone

Picturesque Pursuits offers a comprehensive and enjoyable account of amateur woman artists in the Australian colonies, well illustrated with examples of flower painting, botanical illustration, portrait miniatures and landscapes. The individualism of these women isolated from each other in very different environments is impressive.

Caroline Jordan's description of the social, historical and cultural contexts in which these colonial artists worked is delightful reading. She makes a careful comparison of the 'public amateur artist' with the 'private professional artist' in a society where women's accomplishments were 'intended to adorn their leisure, not employ their lives' and where, prior to 1840 at least, there were no art exhibitions, no illustrious masters to inspire, no art schools to set standards for amateurs and no public galleries.

Jordan argues that female amateur art was a profoundly social act, albeit in a one-to-one sense rather than in the communal sense of American quilting bees. Australian colonial artistic output was used to repay a favour, amuse children, thank benefactors, instruct pupils, inform relatives at 'home', serve as domestic decoration or raise funds for charity. Inspiration came from the natural environment, its flora and fauna and ideas

were often recorded in a serendipitous scrapbook: a female version of the masculine 'cabinet of curiosities'.

Consideration of the picturesque interpretation of landscape raises some interesting points. The lack in colonial Australia of a recognisable prior civilisation denied the artist the 'exotic' element that appears in the colonial art of India or South Africa (apparent in the exhibition '*Capetown: Halfway to Sydney*'). Ironically, no sooner had the female amateur artists managed to perceive signs of the picturesque in the natural environment, than it was demolished, cut down or shot by pioneer settlers with no pretensions to taste. Over such ruthless clearing, planting, stock-raising and hunting, the women had little control. The fragile natural beauty they had come to cherish was being desecrated.

Picturesque Pursuits is an admirable addition to the growing body of work characterised by sound research, well argued contentions and crisp writing that is being generated through the Centre for Australian Studies at Melbourne University under the leadership of Kate Darian-Smith and elegantly realised by Melbourne University Publishing. The book is sure to please all who enjoy early Australian art.

THE AFTERLIFE OF GARDENS

John Dixon Hunt
Reaktion Books Ltd, London, 2004
ISBN: 1 86189 218 7
RRP: \$79.95

Reviewed by Paul Thompson

John Dixon Hunt in *The Afterlife of Gardens* reveals the different ways that gardens have been perceived and experienced over time. Using many examples he shows how the cultural and aesthetic values of the original garden designs can be obscured when visited generations later. The author presents a case for the importance of the availability of design statements or essays of the period to enable a complete experience through understanding of the designer's intention.

This is a heavily referenced academic work. The discussion and explanations are of importance to design professionals, and to committed garden historians interested in the cultural contribution of landscape design as an historic living monument or as a record of contemporary expression.

This hardback book of 254 pages is a collection of eight essays, two written for this book with the others being the essence of lectures and writings given by the author as Professor of History and Theory of Landscape at the University of Pennsylvania, USA. European examples of historic gardens dominate with only one garden from China, some from the United States and oddly none from the most influential garden tradition of Japan.

The first essay discusses how gardens can be experienced and argues the case for accessible documentation of the design intent to enhance later visitor experience and appreciation. The second chapter, 'The Garden as Virtual Reality', presents conceptual landscapes by Noguchi, Peter Walker and others suggesting that 'all good landscape architecture also manages to project a sense both of reality and of virtuality'. This chapter sheds light on how gardens can stimulate the imagination of visitors. To this writer it is a key to the significance of this book.

Chapters four, five and six are the most accessible and useful in understanding the universality of processes and experiences

that can be designed into the landscape. Discussion here focuses on triggers and prompts for visitors, verbal versus visual responses and the role of movement in the way that the garden is 'received' or experienced. These are all aspects of the conscious design process that underlie successful, sophisticated designs from modern Landscape Architectural Offices. They may also be part of the inherent processes of the informal designer.

Chapter seven guides us through the landscape architectural values of roads, tracing some of the influences - from Sylvia Crowe (1960) to Bernard Lasus (1998) - and showing how the design principles of the small landscape can be extrapolated to be effective in the broad countryside. The difference is the scale. This essay emphasises the importance of imaginative design as a strong contributor to the most commonly experienced piece of landscape architecture - the roadway.

The final chapter as a summary does concisely put the author's objectives together, yet in a manner (like much of this book) that is not easy to access but the heavy style and method of writing structure ought not take away from the author's purpose. This is the presentation of different ways of understanding the landscaped garden, and what may be done to appreciate it in greater depth.

From my point of view as a landscape practitioner the message is that when the visitor understands the designer's 'Design Statement' combined with contemporary critical commentary or explanation, a more fulfilling experience may be had. The book assists the ongoing argument for commitment to caring for cultural assets that are consistent with the original ideas and the needs of the community. We are all culturally richer when significant historic landscapes are respected. We could be even more culturally enriched if it were usual to encourage modern landscapes to mature as the designers intended.





A PASSION FOR PLANTS: THE TSESEDERS OF TRURO

Suzanne Tseseder
Alison Hodge, Cornwall UK (2004)
ISBN: 0 906720 38 9
RRP: £12.95

Reviewed by Colleen Morris

Whilst a fascinating account of the rise and demise of a prominent Cornish nursery, it is the particular connection with Australia that garden historians in Australia will find of interest in this book. Suzanne Tseseder commences the story of her family in the 1790s but the book soon focuses on John Garland Tseseder (1841–1923), one of three nurserymen brothers who left Cornwall for Australia in 1857. John married in Bathurst, NSW, returned to Cornwall for ten years in 1866 and then came back to Australia where he ran a successful nursery in the Sydney suburb of Ashfield.

In 1895 John returned to Cornwall and re-established his father's old nursery business, sending plants back to Australia — a shipment to Hobart Public Gardens in 1899 is listed as an appendix — and introducing Australian plants to his clients.

Today his tree ferns and other species thrive in Cornish gardens. Tseseder's Nurseries were involved with numerous Cornish gardens. Trebah, Trengwainton, Heligan and Glendurgan are some that will be familiar to many antipodean travellers.

Parramatta born, Ira Garland Tseseder (1877–1967) followed his father in the nursery trade and designed gardens from 1909 to 1945. When he revisited Australia in 1953 he met with camellia experts Walter Hazlewood and Professor Waterhouse. A number of readers will be familiar with the books by Ira's son Neil Tseseder — *Growing Camellias* (with E. Hyams 1975) and *Magnolias* (1978).

Suzanne Tseseder's account of the family concentrates on the Truro Nurseries and the nurserymen that managed them and although the Australian story is not fully developed, it is placed within in the context of the career of a family with members that are to this day, gripped by a passion for plants. The inclusion of lists of Australian and rare plant introductions as appendices will be of additional appeal to readers who are as equally fascinated by plants as this notable family of nurserymen.



TASMANIA'S RECHERCHE BAY A GLOBALLY INSPIRING STORY

Bob Brown
Green Institute, Hobart, 2005
ISBN: 0 646 44899 4
RRP: \$21.95

Reviewed by Nina Crone

This 56-page booklet published to support the 'Save Recherche Bay' campaign and stop logging and development in the area gives a selection of quotations from *A Voyage in Search of La Perouse 1791-1794*, the diary of naturalist Jacques-Julien Labillardière. Illustrations include maps, drawings by d'Entrecasteaux's draughtsman, Piron, and sublime contemporary colour photographs by Loïc Leguilly among others.

AGHS members will be interested in references to Felix Lahaie's garden 'which was well dug for an extent of 9 metres by 7; [and] had been divided into four sections.'

Overall the book offers an excellent introduction to d'Entrecasteaux's two Tasmanian landfalls and like a good apéritif leaves readers wanting more.

The book contains much useful information for those wishing to support the 'Save Recherche Bay' cause. Pop it into the Christmas stocking for ecologists, historians and 'greenies' of all ages, from twelve years upward.

There is a campaign to raise money to purchase and manage forested land central to the historic Recherche Bay landscape. For more information write to: Senator Bob Brown, GPO Box 404, Hobart 7001 or visit www.bobbrown.org.au



Town & Country

PORTRAITS OF COLONIAL HOMES AND GARDENS

BY SUZANNE HUNT

Nicholas CHEVALIER
*The Hill, Residence of
 William Robertson,
 Overlooking Lake Coloc*
 1863
 oil on canvas
 Private collection

Reproduced with
 permission of Bendigo
 Art Gallery.

Those of you who missed the travelling exhibition *Converting the Wilderness: The Art of Gardening in Colonial Australia* in 1979-1980 will not want to miss the opportunity of seeing this. The current exhibition *Town and Country: Portraits of Colonial Homes and Gardens* offers a visual feast of homes and gardens that captures the essence of colonial aspirations, taste, fashion and personal ambition. Most of the pictures have not been shown before, so your horizons will be broadened and enriched.

House and garden portraiture flourished between the years 1830 to 1870, but after this period the popularity of photography gradually superseded the commissioning of work by both amateur and professional painters. This was an important development. Photographs tend to fall into the category of documentation and are fairly static. The artistic licence practised by painters lends itself to interpretation. The house and garden portraiture on display therefore can be viewed as a personal expression inviting the visitor to admire the sweeping landscape or the quirky interloping of people riding by or sitting in the garden.

Not only does the artist interpret the houses, gardens and surrounding landscapes as an idyllic moment captured in time but it also allows the owner to add or delete details that may enhance the image. A good example is the work by Frederick Garling, *Retford Hall* c. 1865. People attired in their Sunday best perambulate about the grounds and others stare at the scene from the mansion in the background. The owner clearly wants to give the impression of civility and the solid foundation of success. Albeit on a smaller scale, *Muirhead's Station* by Eugène von Guérard c. 1856, expresses a similar message. The wooden cottages are enclosed within a picket fence in defiance of the surrounding bush while the family walks down the road to meet the master of the house flitting by on horseback.

These intimate house portraits are charming and evocative and have been described as typically 'English'. In a different vein the work *Minjah in the Old Time* by Robert Dowling c. 1856 suggests the domestication of an Aboriginal group who may work on the property. Possum skin cloaks, boomerangs, spears and a



Robert DOWLING
Minjah in the Old Time
c.1856
oil on canvas
Warrnambool Art Gallery.
Gift of Joseph Ware c.1894

Reproduced with
permission of Bendigo
Art Gallery.

small shelter constructed out of boughs and leaves gives the viewer a 'feel' for their life style. The group are posed well away from the homestead and it is interesting to contemplate the nature of their relationship with the owners.

My favourite paintings are the grand landscapes produced by artists of the calibre of Clark, von Guérard and Chevalier. Unmistakably Australian, sweeping hills and broad plains capture the immensity of the land. Large scale homesteads and outhouses are tucked

intimately into the distance. The important message portrayed is that of being 'at one' with the land. Having tamed the bush and sown the pasture these are idyllic scenes of prosperity. The settler has made his mark and is comfortable with the progress achieved.

Town and country house and garden portraits give us a unique glimpse into the aspirations and personal tastes of colonial settlers. They can be interpreted on many levels and are a rich source of detail and a fascinating exposé of life in 19th century Australia.

Suzanne Hunt is a social historian who has promoted interest in garden history through the establishment of a specialist garden history archive at the State Library of Victoria and through practical support for the Gardenesque exhibition staged last year by that institution.

Town & Country: Portraits of Colonial Homes & Gardens can be seen:

26 November 2005 to 5 February 2006
Geelong Gallery, Geelong

18 February to 16 April 2006
Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery,
Launceston, Tasmania

EDITOR FOR AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY

After 5 years of editing the Society's journal Nina Crone has advised that she wishes to hand over the responsibilities to a new editor after the completion of Volume 17, Number 5, May/June 2006 and the National Management Committee is calling for expressions of interest in the position.

The Editor will be responsible to the National Management Committee for the content of the journal, its design and production and will have an Editorial Advisory Committee for reference.

The ideal applicants should have

- A knowledge of and enthusiasm for Australian garden history
- A good existing network of contacts in this field, or the ability to develop one
- Some editorial and or writing experience
- Good computer skills and access to email, telephone and fax
- Good organisational skills and the ability to meet deadlines

A 'Position Description' can be obtained from the Executive Officer, Jackie Courmadias on (03) 9650 5043 or Toll Free 1800 678 446, E-mail info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au. Further information about the role and time commitment can be discussed with Nina Crone on (03) 9417 0493 or ncrone@dcsi.net.au or with the Chair of the National Management Committee, Colleen Morris c/- AGHS office.

Anyone who is interested in this position should forward an 'Expression of Interest' to Jackie Courmadias at the AGHS Office by Friday 3 February, 2006.

Items of Interest

ACT GARDEN HISTORY ON VIDEO – CAN YOU HELP?

Under the 2005-2006 ACT Heritage Grants Program, the ACT government has provided part funding of \$9248 (excluding GST) to the ACT Branch for the project Documentary Video – *ACT Gardening: A History*. This project follows earlier branch-funded publications to record, measure and publish details of significant historic gardens in the region. The ACT has a unique gardening history, with innovative initiatives like the free government issue of trees and shrubs to householders – a highly successful strategy to encourage the establishment of home gardens. The professionally produced video will also record the changing nature of gardening with the passage of time. The Branch is seeking additional sponsors to augment the budget for this project. Enquiries: Brian Voce bvoce@ozemail.com.au

AGHS AT 'CORRUGATIONS'

Several AGHS members were involved in the Australia ICOMOS 2005 Conference 'Corrugations: the Romance and Reality of Historic Roads' held 25-27 November in Melbourne. Professor Jane Lennon's paper was 'Tracking through the Cultural Landscape'. Charlotte Webb, from the Southern Highlands Branch spoke on 'The Remembrance Drive' and Timothy Hubbard was the organising Convener. All members of the society congratulate Timothy on being awarded the inaugural Leslie M. Perrott/ISS Institute Fellowship which will enable him to study in the United States.

SHARE YOUR PASSION FOR PLANTS

Luke Saffigna, Visitor Program Officer at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, is looking for 30 people to help in the Volunteer Master Gardener Program being developed to change the way visitors perceive and use Australian plants.

Luke says:

'Our aim is to create opportunities for visitors of all ages to interact in an informal way with knowledgeable, passionate and RBG Cranbourne-trained home gardeners.'

Volunteering is open to anyone from the age of 16 to 85. Applications close at the end of January 2006. For details phone Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne (03) 5990 2200.



WELCOME TO A NEW SUB-BRANCH

The recently formed New England and North West NSW sub-branch of AGHS held its second meeting in the historic garden Salisbury Court at Uralla, home of Sir Owen and Lady Sally Croft. There was a great deal of interest in the new group with a noticeable increase in members since the first meeting. The executive committee comprises Owen as Chair, Sally as Secretary, Bill Oates from the Archives Division of the University of New England, Graham Wilson, Heritage Advisor for a number of New England Councils, and Ian Telford from the Botany Department at UNE. All are passionate about garden history.

Members of the New England and North West New South sub-branch of AGHS.

From left:
Ian Telford, Graham Wilson,
Bill Oates, Sir Owen Croft
and Lady Sally Croft.

HONOUR FOR RICHARD AITKEN

Hard-working member of AGHS who will next year add another title to his growing list of published works, Richard Aitken was elected an Honorary Member of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) in recognition of his distinguished service to that organisation.

REPORT OF THE 25TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Following the 25th Annual General Meeting of the Society, the National Management Committee for 2005-6 is:

Elected members: Max Bourke (Vice-Chair), Colleen Morris (Chair), Malcolm Faul (Treasurer), Sarah Lucas, Stuart Read (Public Officer), Christine Reid, Di Wilkins (Secretary). State representatives: Cecily Dean (Qld), Wendy Dwyer (Vic), Wendy Joyner (SA), Ivan Saltmarsh (Tasmania), Jill Scheetz (ACT) and Chris Webb (NSW). The WA State Representative is to be confirmed.

THANK YOU PACKERS

Thanks go to Di Ellerton, Fran and Mal Faul, Beverley and John Joyce, Sandi Pullman, Ann Rayment, Georgina Whitehead, Elizabeth Wright and Kathy Wright for the job of packing all the Annual Reports and other notices with the last issue of the journal.

Diary Dates

DECEMBER

3 Saturday

Bungendore,
ACT/Monaro/Riverina Branch
Christmas Party at Bill and
Philippa Kelly's historic home.
Contact: Brian Voce
(02) 6238 1446

4 Sunday

Norton Summit, South Australia
4-7pm Christmas Drinks at
Andrew & Carolyn Quixley's
home (Green Valley Road). Cost
\$10 and please bring a plate of
food. RSVP Lyn Hillier on 8339
1033 by 25 November.

Perth, Western Australia
Christmas Function in
Queens Gardens.

Hobart, Tasmania
Christmas Function at Newtown
House Park

10 Saturday

Geelong, Victoria
11am at the Geelong Art Gallery,
tour of the exhibition *Town and
Country: portraits of colonial
homes and gardens*, followed by
BYO picnic lunch in the Geelong
Botanic Gardens. Transport by
private car. Offers of transport
would be appreciated.
Contact: Pamela Jellie (03) 9836
1881 or pjellie@hotmail.com

Observatory Hill, Sydney
Research Forum & Christmas
Party at National Trust Centre.

21 Wednesday

Victoria, Melbourne
Working Bee at Bishopscourt.
Contact: Helen Page
(03) 9397 2260.

JANUARY

18 Wednesday

Victoria, Melbourne
Working Bee at Bishopscourt.
Contact: Helen Page
(03) 9397 2260.

28 Saturday and 29 Sunday

Victoria, Castlemaine
Working Bees:
Tute's Cottage (Saturday)
[Vicroads 287 70] and Buda
(Sunday) [Vicroads 287 4Q].
Contact: Helen Page
(03) 9397 2260.

FEBRUARY

15 Wednesday

Victoria, Melbourne
Working Bee at Bishopscourt.
Contact: Helen Page
(03) 9397 2260.

9 Thursday

Victoria, Melbourne
Walk & Talk: Hedgeley Dene with
Georgina Whitehead. Meet 6.00
for 6.30pm by notice-board at
top of the pond. Access Kardella
St or Tollington Ave. [Melway 59
H11]. BYO Picnic Tea to welcome
New Year and new members.
Contact: Lorrie Lawrence (03)
5427 1328.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Villa Alba, 44 Walmer St, Kew is
open on the first Sunday of
every month from 1-4pm. See
the recently re-created 1880s
garden and the magnificent
painted murals in the mansion,
www.villaalbamuseum.org

Nov 2005 - Feb 2006

Melbourne Victoria - 'Gardens
of Earthly Delight' an exhibition
tracing the development of
Melbourne's parks and gardens.
At the City Museum, Old
Treasury, Melbourne.

VICTORIA - ONGOING WORKING BEES

St Helier's Abbotsford Convent

Gardens: First Wednesday & Third
Saturday of every month except
January. Starting time 9.30am.
morning tea is provided, BYO
lunch and gardening gloves.
Assistance in garden is most
welcome. Contact: PameiaJellie
pjellie@hotmail.com

Bishopscourt: Third Wednesday

of every month
The AGHS maintains this garden
at 120 Clarendon St, East
Melbourne and welcomes new
volunteers. Contact:
helenpage@bigpond.com

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ANNE V. VALE

MAIH, Adv. Dip. Hort., Grad. Dip. Plan & Design
Mob: 0419 893 523 Fax/Tel: (03) 5427 2150

Heriscapes@hotmail.net.au

Pale

Ferenc (Frank) Gyorgy Maria Ugody 1925-2005

With the passing of Frank Ugody earlier this year, South Australia lost an expert nurseryman and plantsmen.

Born in Danszentmiklos in Hungary, Frank spent his younger years in the family's 55h estate, 50km from Budapest, which his father had extensively sought to plant. This setting inspired Frank to study at the University of Agriculture in Budapest, but with the invasion by Soviet troops in 1945 the family was dispossessed.

Following time in detention centres, prison and concentration camps, he escaped to Austria, and served with the French occupation forces in Innsbruck.

In 1949 Frank migrated to Adelaide and worked for two years at the Port Adelaide woolsheds and at the General Motors- Holden plant. In 1952 he commenced a nursery and garden design business called 'Garden Health and Spray Service' at his home in Parkholme. His services encompassed garden design, construction, arboriculture, plant disease assessment and treatment, lawn mowing and renovation, supply of advanced plants, pruning and the supply of garden materials. By 1980 the business had grown into Ugody Landscaping Pty Ltd.

Underpinning the strength of Frank was his wife Lois. The two met five months after his arrival in Adelaide. Lois taught Frank English, they were married in 1954, and she inspired his nursery business and his approach to life.

Frank was instrumental in gathering most South Australian landscape businesses

together under the 'Garden Designers & Contractors Association', serving as its inaugural state president and as a foundation member. He shifted this organisation into the South Australian Association of Nurserymen serving as its state president in 1977-79 and later winning the Association's Award of Honour. He was a life member of the Royal Australian Institute of Parks & Recreation, a life member of the Arboricultural Association of Australia (now the International Society of Arboriculture, Australian Chapter), and a winner of the Landscaper of the Year award in South Australia.



Philosophically, he often remarked: "I was born lucky. I had exceptional parents and at birth we had opulence. We did better than average, even during the depression years. Then the sky fell in." He never lost his Hungarian roots, becoming a foundation member, former vice-president and life member of the Hungarian Cub. In 1983 he

was the first person awarded the 60-year Jubilee Cross of Merit by the High Commissioner of the Order of Vitez, in recognition of his work for Hungarians in exile.

To many South Australians he was a well respected landscape design, gardening and nursery expert, and a regular Saturday morning voice of radio 5AA's Environmental Update.

David Jones

Dr Jones is Head of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Adelaide and a member of the editorial advisory panel for Australian Garden History.

Pictured: Frank Ugody



Pale

Herbert Bernard Hutton (Barney)
1911-2005

*I think there are as many kinds of gardening as
of poetry* (Joseph Addison)

My father, Barney Hutton was born in England in 1911, but spent his early life in India where his father was an irrigation engineer. His father retired just at the outbreak of the First World War and the family moved to Kashmir where they lived until returning to England in 1920. During the time in Kashmir the family lived in Srinagar, sometimes in a house and sometimes on a houseboat on the Dal Lake. Each year they escaped the summer heat by moving up to a hill station, travelling there by one-horse carriage until the road gave out and completing the journey on ponies.

On their return to England the family settled in Worcestershire and Dad went off to boarding school (not an easy adjustment after Kashmir) followed by Cambridge where he read modern languages. After further study in Paris and teaching in Germany and briefly in England, Dad took up a position at Geelong Grammar School where, with the exception of the war years and two years teaching in England after the war, he taught until retiring to Mt Macedon. He had married my mother Marion Aglen before he left England, and she joined him in Australia the following year. In all Dad's years of teaching he lived in houses belonging to the School and so although he made gardens wherever he lived, he didn't have his own garden until he bought the house at Mt Macedon a few years before his retirement.

Those early years in Kashmir made a profound impression on Dad. His appreciation of natural beauty and his love of plants developed at this time. In writing of these times he tells of picnics in Kashmir, some near a ravine above the tree line, where he filled the time by looking for as many different wildflowers as he could find. Some that he mentioned were *Primula denticulata*, *Primula rosea* and a wild violet with deep purple flowers.

From a very young age, plants and flowers were a recurring theme in Dad's life. He kept a garden at his prep school. His letters home comment on its progress and on the wildflowers he saw on his walks. For example, at the age of eleven he wrote to his mother, "My garden is very well, the sweet peas are almost as forward as yours you raised in the frame . . . The trees are much further on hear (his spelling!)."

During school holidays he helped in his parents' garden, and on his father's small holding. He spoke of the beauty of nearby Woodbury Hill ('Woodbury' being the name he later chose for his Mt Macedon property) when it was blue with bluebells, the places where wild daffodils grew and the woods where lily of the valley grew wild. His letters home from Cambridge mention flowers that he had in his room, some sent to him by his mother, and of their perfume filling his room. A love of flowers was part of his inheritance from his mother.

Dad's remarkable knowledge of plants and gardens, much of it specific to particular groups of plants, was the result of his own interest and reading, something he only had the time to develop in retirement. The garden became a plant collector's garden but never just a collection of plants. Dad's knowledge and interest in particular plants was reflected in the topics he wrote about in articles for this Journal and for *The Age*.

In later years his interests were largely in small bulbs, woodland plants and peonies. He was a member of Species Peony International Network (SPIN) whose objective was to preserve the gene pool of wild species of peonies. So, as the vegetable garden diminished peonies took over the space. There were species, tree and herbaceous peonies mostly grown from seed as well as hybrids. He loved all peonies from the small single species ones to the largest double hybrids. He sent seeds of some species to Europe, and continued to sow peony seeds almost to the end of his life which is quite

remarkable when one considers that the time it takes for peonies to germinate, let alone flower, is measured in years.

In a similar way, at the age of 72, he had responded to the loss of most of his garden in the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires by seeing benefits in the loss of some large conifers and other trees which allowed him to make the garden entirely his own. And while my mother helped, Dad was the chief gardener and the garden was his creation. 'Woodbury' was however a garden he willingly shared. It was among the first gardens to be to open under the then Victorian Open Garden Scheme, (later the Australian Open Garden Scheme) and it was always available to a number of charities for fundraising.

My parents were both keen local historians as well as gardeners. Dad researched and wrote about nurseries of the Mt Macedon area and together with Frank Moulds he co-authored the book *The Macedon Ranges: Forests and People - a history of change*. Mum wrote about Hanging Rock and the Macedon District. They were for a time members of the Garden History Society and attended a number of its events including a conference in Canberra.

Dad's library which had a remarkable gardening collection also contained a lot of poetry books. The quotation from Joseph Addison is one of several to be found at the front of an informal garden diary that he kept over a number of years.

Peronelle Windeyer
October 2005

This celebration of the life of a remarkable gardener was written by his daughter, Peronelle Windeyer, at the request of the editor.



Marion and Barney Hutton in the garden at Woodbury.

Photo:
Ray Messner, *Your Garden*,
January 1995, reproduced
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Three York Beauties

BY NINA CRONE



Top:
A 'found' gate in the garden at Lowe House.

Centre:
Eucalyptus wandoo surrounds the former St Paul's church at Tipperary.

Bottom:
Agave omericono at Wynobbing.

Right:
A reflective pool at Wynobbing.

Photos: Nina Crone

York, established in 1851 as the first town beyond the Darling Scarp in Western Australia, is notable for early colonial buildings and challenging climatic conditions for gardeners which made the three gardens visited on the conference optional day particularly memorable.

Lowe House, named for the Wesleyan minister who built the two-storey house in 1880, stands in front of the original 1831 cottage known as Fonthill for the spring on the property.

Among the plants that survived the front yard grazing activities of the previous owner are some fruit trees – *Morus alba*, (black mulberry), *Ficus carica* (fig) and *Prunus armeniaca* (apricot), while bougainvillea and ivy cover the remains of the windmill stand. The age of two hybrid roses is estimated to be 80 years and four old damask roses still survive.

The present owner has created a bountiful, rose-filled garden where informal planting has created many bowers brimming with exuberant, scented blooms and enhanced by old gates, pots, grilles and other *objets trouvés* to evoke the Edwardian romanticism

Tipperary, 11km out of York on the road to Northam, is situated in the Avon Valley where the garden surrounding the former St Paul's church offers wonderful vistas of rolling sheep pastures and croplands.

Originally designed by artists Teddye and Bryant McDiven the garden consists of walled enclosures to protect tender plants from the elements and has retained many of the natural tree cover – *Eucalyptus wandoo*.

During the McDiven stewardship Tipperary gained an Australia wide reputation for excellent design blending plants, landscape and artworks. It contains a memorial walk to English cineaste Sydney Box who directed the award-winning film *The Seventh Veil*.

Following the departure of the McDivens the garden suffered neglect and weed infestation but the present owners are re-establishing it with generous planting of succulents (*Cotyledon orbiculata*, *Agave attenuata*, *Crassula argentea* and *Aloe arborescens*). *Arctotis* species add a colourful ground cover.

At **Wynobbing House** artist Joan Loring has designed and planted an inspiring garden with strong axial elements, a muted colour palette, impressive terraces, aromatic hardy perennials and peaceful reflective pools. This hillside garden is alive with birdsong, inhabited by whimsical ceramic figures and affords commanding views of the town from the verandah of the Federation house.

The central axial path descends the hill between two ancient jacarandas, remnants of the original garden, as are also the *Cedrus deodara*, *Melia azederach*, *Erythrina x sykesii*. Joan is increasing the number of proven species in the new lower garden adding olives to further the pleasing unity of the garden.

With lateritic gravel paths, hardy plants and imaginative design these three gardens in York are excellent examples of 'no lawn' gardens. They all deserve to be better known.



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